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Timofeeva, Olga

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CHAPTER 10

Latin Absolute Constructions and Their Old English Equivalents

Interfaces between Form and Information Structure

OLGA TIMOFEEVA

ABSTRACT

This study uses a comparative corpus of Latin texts and their Old English translations to examine the interplay between the information structure of Latin absolute participial constructions and that of their Old English renderings. It attempts to establish relationships between the semantics of absolute constructions, their functional thematic/rhematic role in communication, the order of the main and absolute clauses in a sentence, text cohesion, and the kind of impact these factors have on individual translation solutions. This analysis shows that the source information structure is normally carried over into the target texts, even though individual translation solutions vary from extensive restructuring of the target text to complete omission of the source constructions; while text cohesion can be maintained both by Latinate syntactic means and by expanding or abbreviating the source constructions.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Adverbial clauses in which the subordinating relationship is marked by nominalizing the verb is a feature attested crosslinguistically. If the subject of the subordinate verb is not coreferential with that of the main verb, the subordinate verb and the (pro)nouns dependent on it can be marked by a specific case (Thompson & Longacre 1985: 200–3, 227, Givón 2001: ii, 342). In Latin, these clauses are marked by the ablative and are traditionally termed *ablative absolutes*. Old English (OE) has a similar construction—*dative absolute*.

Its use, however, is restricted to translations from Latin and other text types that imitate Latin prose, which has led many scholars to conclude that they are not part of the native OE system.¹

If, indeed, there is no structural equivalent for the ablative absolute in the OE paradigm of adverbial clauses, what other ways to render the semantics of the absolute construction are available? In fact, individual translation solutions vary from extensive restructuring of the target text to complete omission of the source constructions. Below I present a comparative corpus study of Latin absolute constructions and their various renderings in OE translations. I examine the interplay between the information structure of Latin absolute participial constructions (APCs) and that of their OE translations, trying to establish relationships between the semantics of APCs, their functional thematic/rhematic role in communication, and the order of the main and absolute clauses in a sentence. Before I begin my analysis, I address some basic notions of the APCs and their relation to the information structure of an utterance and present my research corpus.

10.2 DEFINITIONS AND PATTERNS OF THE APC

For definitions of the absolute participial construction, I rely on discussions of the APCs in Quirk et al. (1972: §11.48, §11.50, 1985: §§15.58–15.60) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1265–6, 1350–62), which can be summarized as follows: the APC is a non-finite supplementive clause characterized by an overt subject of its own and somewhat loose syntactic connection to the matrix clause, although a semantic relation between the APC and its anchor in the matrix clause does exist.² The anchor can be expressed by an NP or a clause. The existence of these two types of anchors enables us to distinguish between two types of absolute constructions (APCs in italics): *All things considered*, the result was reasonably satisfactory (main clause as anchor (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1360)), and Kim and Pat, *both of them suffering from hypothermia*, were winched into the helicopter (NP as anchor (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1266)).

Quirk et al. assert that, in general, APCs express attendant circumstances or contingency, while a more specific sense has to be inferred from the context. An APC's relations to the superordinate clause can be temporal, conditional, causal, concessive, and circumstantial, the fifth being the most common (1972: §11.48). I give a brief characterization and an example of each type below. Because APCs can have two types of anchors, I distinguish between adverbial APCs proper with a clause as anchor (types i–iv) and adverbial-adjectival APCs with an NP as anchor (types v–vii):³

- (i) APCs of time (the APC is typically sentence-initial and is likely to contain a dynamic present participle or a telic perfect participle); example (APC in italics): *Dinner finished*, we left for the opera (quoted in Kortmann 1991: 10);
- (ii) APCs of cause (the APC is typically sentence-initial and is likely to contain a stative verb): *Weather conditions being favourable*, the committee ordered the making of a large quantity of bricks (BNC CMG 1166);

- (iii) APCs of condition (the APC is typically sentence-initial; a future tense or modal is used in the superordinate clause): ... *the resident pupils being distant from places of dissipation*, it will protect their morals and they will employ their time in study (BNC B2W 449);
- (iv) APCs of concession (the APC is typically sentence-initial and the superordinate clause is likely to have a connective adverb, such as *still*, *anyway*, *nevertheless*, or a modal): Today, *with national polls consistently unfavourable for the Alliance*, the faith of the Liberals ... remains untarnished (GUA 6, quoted in Kortmann 1991: 163);
- (v) APCs of attendant circumstances (the APC is typically sentence-final and there is constituent coreference—full, partial, or implied—between the NPs of the main clause and the APC): Across the region regulators have said they are overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, *the situation being compounded by a steady stream of newly found leaks* (BNC J37 649);
- (vi) APCs of manner (the APC is typically sentence-final, there is a semantic link between the VP of the main clause and the APC, and constituent coreference between the NP of the main clause and the APC): Three basic points are fixed on a plaster model of the original and on the marble block ... *each point being marked by drilling a hole to the required depth* (BNC AR4 212);
- (vii) appositive APCs (the APC is typically sentence-final; the subject of the APC is typically expressed by words that are bound to the main subject by relations of inalienable possession, i.e., by parts of the body, facial features, etc.): She shrank into a seat near the back, *her heart beating a mile a minute* (BNC JY6 2024).

In classical Latin, the absolute construction commonly uses the present participle or perfect participle. Example (1) contains one token of each (the present participle construction is in italics and the perfect participle construction is underlined).

- (1) Caesar *exploratis* *regionibus* albente caelo omnes copias castris educit
 Caesar explored-ABL territories-ABL dawning-ABL sky-ABL all troops out-of-fort led
 'the territories having been explored and the sky starting to dawn, Caesar led all the troops out of the fort'
 (Caes. Civ. 1.68)

The perfect participle, *exploratis*, suggests that its eventuality is prior to that of the superordinate verb, *educit*, while the eventuality of the present participle, *albente*, is simultaneous with it (Menge 2000: §503, Hofmann: 1965: §85a; citations in exx. (1–3) are from these two sources). The types of APCs, the relations between their semantics, and the grammatical context of main and subordinate clauses are essentially the same as in Present-Day English; with concessive APCs, for example, the main clause may often contain one of the connectives: *tamen*, *at*, *attamen*, *certe*, *nihilo minus* 'still, nevertheless,' as in

- (2) *Perditis rebus omnibus tamen ipsa virtus se sustentare posse videatur*
 lost-ABL things-ABL all-ABL still this virtue itself sustain to-be-able would-seem
 'Everything being lost, still this virtue would seem to be able to sustain itself'
 (Cic. Fam. 6.1.4)

The main clauses are also likely to have subjunctive forms or modals (*posse* in the example above). As in Present-Day English, modals are frequent in the main clauses of Latin conditional sentences:

- (3) Quae potest esse vitae iucunditas *sublatis* *amicitiis*? (Cic. Planc. 80)
 what may be life's delight taken-away-ABL friendships-ABL
 'What may be the delight of life, with bonds of friendship taken from it?'

10.3 DATA

The data for this study comes from a corpus of five OE translated texts and their Latin originals studied in editions: (i) books 1 and 2 of Gregory's *Dialogues*, translated into English in the second half of the 9th century, and a later revision of this translation carried out in the 10–11th centuries; here I only take into account those chapters of the *Dialogues* that survive in both versions; (ii) book 4 of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (second half of the 9th century); (iii) the *Life of St. Chad*, which is also based on book 4, chapters 2–3 of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (second half of the 9th century); (iv) the Gospel of St. Matthew from the *West-Saxon Gospels* (early 11th century); and (v) the Old English translation of *Genesis* (early 11th century), including both Ælfric's translation of chapters 1–24 and the anonymous translation of 25–50.⁴

10.4 APCs IN INFORMATION STRUCTURE

The position and meaning of adverbial elements within a sentence or text have particular communicative functions. Robert Longacre's crosslinguistic discussion of the role of adverbial clauses in discourse shows that at the paragraph level, the basic functions of adverbial clauses are twofold: to provide general cohesion between successive paragraphs⁵ of a discourse and to contribute local background to the sentence in which they occur (Thompson & Longacre 1985: 206–34). General cohesion is typically maintained through time, place, cause, concession, and condition clauses—"adverbial APCs proper" in my classification above, while local background can be introduced by manner, attendant circumstances, and appositive clauses—"adverbial-adjectival APCs" (Timofeeva 2010: 30–3). Therefore, it is the former clauses that tend to function as topics. Their characteristics are that they:

- (i) appear in sentence-initial position,
- (ii) are discourse dependent,
- (iii) need not be arguments of the main predication,
- (iv) are definite,
- (v) establish a circumstantial framework within which the main predication holds (Chafe 1976: 50, Thompson & Longacre 1985: 229, Givón 2001: ii, 343).

The cohesion of a discourse is maintained by two major linkage strategies: *tail-head linkage* and *summary-head linkage*. *Tail-head* means that "something mentioned in the last sentence of the preceding paragraph is referred to by means of back-reference in an

adverbial clause in the following paragraph," while with *summary-head*, "the first sentence of a successive paragraph has a clause which summarizes the preceding paragraph" (Thompson & Longacre 1985: 208–11; cf. Lehmann 1988: 187–8). I give examples of absolute constructions from the Latin part of my corpus to demonstrate these two linkage strategies.

- (4) Qui cum pariter per mare ad Massiliam, ac deinde per terram Arhelas peruenissent, et tradidissent Iohanni archiepiscopo ciuitatis illius scripta commendaticia Uitaliani pontificis, retenti sunt ab eo, quousque Ebrinus maior domus regiae copiam pergendi quoquo uellent tribuit eis. *Qua accepta* Theodorus profectus est ad Agilbertum Parisiorum episcopum (Colgrave & Mynors 1969, HE iv.1.330.19)
'when they together had come by sea to Marseilles, and thence by land to Arles, and had handed to John, archbishop of that town, the commendatory letters of Pope Vitalian, they were detained by him [John], until Ebroin, the king's mayor of the palace, gave them leave to go where they pleased. Having received it [the leave]/when they received it, Theodore went to Agilbert, the bishop of Paris'

Qua accepta is an example of tail-head linkage, which gives a back-reference to *copiam pergendi* 'leave to go' in the previous sentence. It both marks the boundary between the two paragraphs and secures the cohesion.

- (5) haec autem eo cogitante ecce angelus Domini in somnis apparuit ei dicens
these indeed he-ABL considering-ABL behold angel of-Lord in dream appeared-to-him saying
'while he considered these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying' (Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Mt 1.20)

Here *eo cogitante* is a summary-head linkage, as verses 18 and 19 in Matthew, chapter 1, indicate what exactly Joseph was thinking about. The general-cohesion APCs in these two examples can be reduced to an adverb, 'then' or 'meanwhile' or even be omitted from the paragraphs without causing much confusion to the semantics of other text elements.

This is not the case with local-background APCs, as in (6):

- (6) Sita est autem haec insula contra medium Australium Saxonum et Geuissorum, *interposito pelago* latitudinis trium milium, quod uocatur Soluente. In quo uidelicet pelago bini aestus Oceani... sibimet inuicem cotidie conpugnantes occurrunt ultra hostium fluminis Homelea (Colgrave & Mynors 1969, HE iv.16.384.3)
'and this island [the Isle of Wight] is situated opposite the border of the South Saxons and the Gewisse, with three miles of sea being located between, which is called the Solent. In this sea the two ocean tides... confronting each other meet daily beyond the mouth of the river Hamble'

The position of *interposito pelago* is more closely integrated into the semantic structure of the main clause; its relation is intrasentential (attendant circumstances, being similar to both *and*-coordination and the relative clause), as opposed to interparagraph relation of

such discourse-old elements as *haec insula* and *in quo uidelicet pelago*. Note that if *interposito pelago* were preposed, the sentence would hardly make any sense.

Summing up, the semantics of APCs seems to be closely connected to their information structure. Adverbial APCs tend to behave as topics and are responsible for the general cohesion of a discourse, while adjectival APCs are likely to be discourse-new and hence to appear in postposition to the main clause, for which they provide a local background.

It seems reasonable to suggest that, if text cohesion is to be maintained in OE translations from Latin, the information structure of the source text should remain essentially unchanged. Below, I examine translation strategies used by Anglo-Saxon translators to preserve the information structure.

10.5 ANALYSIS

In my analysis of techniques applied in Old English translations of Latin ablative APCs, I took a total of 524 relevant examples into account. As can be seen in table 10.1, the overall percentage of literal renderings, that is, ablative absolutes rendered by dative absolutes, is close to 22%, although percentages of dative absolutes vary from one text to another. The earlier texts (especially the translations of Gregory's *Dialogues* and the *Life of St. Chad*) tend to be more literal in their approach to the APCs. Later translators, on the other hand, exercise more freedom in their solutions, with the OE *Genesis* being remarkably deliberate in its avoidance of dative absolutes (see Timofeeva 2008). Other translation methods include adverbial and independent finite clauses, prepositional phrases, omission of the construction, and free renderings.

According to the types of APCs described in section 10.2, I have divided my examples into seven groups: APCs of time, attendant circumstances, cause, condition, concession, manner, and appositive APCs. A quantitative analysis of the data is given in table 10.2,⁶ which is based on Latin originals of translated texts. In the following analysis, I only address translation strategies that are either very frequent or particularly relevant for the information structure and cohesion of the paragraphs in which they are used (the full range of translation strategies is discussed in Timofeeva (2010: 33–59)).

Table 10.1. PERCENTAGE OF LITERAL RENDERINGS IN EACH TRANSLATED TEXT

Text	Dative Absolute %
Gregory's <i>Dialogues</i>	35.3
<i>Life of St. Chad</i>	32.3
<i>Old English Bede</i>	20.3
<i>West-Saxon Gospels</i>	17.1
<i>OE Genesis</i>	0
Translations total	21.8

Table 10.2. THE DISTRIBUTION OF APC MEANINGS IN THE LATIN PART OF THE CORPUS

Semantics of the APC	Nos. (%)
Time	279 (69.6)
Attendant circumstances	45 (11.2)
Appositive	29 (7.2)
Cause	29 (7.2)
Condition	10 (2.5)
Concession	6 (1.5)
Manner	3 (0.7)
Total	401 (100)

The temporal sense is by far the most frequent, with some fluctuation between different texts and genres (in Bede's *HE*, temporal APCs account for 62.5%, while in the *West-Saxon Gospels* this usage is still more frequent at 88.2%). Since temporal APCs provide the most extensive data for analysis (close to 70% of all examples), they are given more space here, the other sections in the discussion below following the outline of table 10.2.

10.5.1 APCs of Time

First of all, as noted above, there are cases in which both the form and information structure of the temporal APC remain unchanged (22.8%). Let us consider one example from the *West-Saxon Gospels*.

- (7) (a) Et *relicta civitate Nazareth* venit et habitavit in Capharnaum
and left-ABL city-ABL Nazareth came-he and dwelt in Capernaum
'And leaving the city of Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum'
(Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Mt 4.13)
- (b) and *forlætenre þære ceastre nazareth*. he com and eardode on capharnaum
and left-DAT the-DAT city-DAT Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum
(Liuzza 1994)
(see (7a))

The APC on the whole is thematic and so is its subject *Nazareth*, while its participle *relicta* is rhematic. Using Halliday's analysis of nonfinite dependent clauses (1994: 61–3), its thematic structure can be presented as in figure 10.1:

et	relicta	civitate Nazareth	venit et habitavit in Capharnaum
structural	Rheme2	topical	
Theme1	Rheme1		

Figure 10.1 Information structure in example (7).

In Old English, the absolute construction is retained, with only a minor addition (the definite article *þære*) being introduced. Thus we see that the Latin ablative absolute and its OE calque work in the same way communicatively, appearing sentence-initially to provide tail–head linkage between the paragraphs.

Let us now look at several transformations involved in OE renderings of APCs. They are illustrated in (8)–(10) (see fig. 10.2 for the structure of example (8)).

ipsisque regnantibus	defunctus est ille
Theme	Rheme

Figure 10.2 Information structure in example (8).

- (8) (a) *ipsisque regnantibus* defunctus est ille
these-ABL and reigning-ABL died he
'and while they were reigning he died'
(Colgrave & Mynors 1969, HE iv.12.368.13)
- (b) & *in heora rice* Leutherius se biscop forðferde
and in their reign Leutherius the bishop away-passed
'and during their reign bishop Leutherius died'
(Miller 1959 [1891], Bede iv.15.298.5)

In example (8a), both the subject *ipsis* and the participle *regnantibus* are discourse-old: Bede has mentioned earlier in the text that the subkings—referred to anaphorically as *ipsis*—ruled for ten years. The meaning of the whole clause can be summarized as 'mean-while.' The participle here is nominalized and thus its meaning is preserved in translation. Both *ipsisque regnantibus* (8a) and & *in heora rice* (8b) function communicatively as tail–head linkage adverbials. Renderings by prepositional phrases are characteristic of the OE translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and are restricted to a number of set phrases (with verbs such as *regno*, *gubernare*, *impero* meaning 'to rule, govern'), which are a distinctive feature of Bede's narrative style.

The most frequent translation strategy is a finite temporal clause (27% of the data).

- (9) (a) *His itaque transactis*, factus est sermo Domini ad
these-ABL so and finished-ABL appeared word of-Lord to
Abram per visionem (Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Gen 15.1)
Abram through vision
'and so these events being over, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision'
- (b) *Da ðis gedon wæs*, þa wearð Godes spræc to Abrame ðurh gesyhðe
when this done was then came God's word to Abram through vision
'when this was done, the word of the God came to Abram in a vision'
(Crawford 1922, Gen 15.1)

His ... transactis (9a) is an example of summary-head linkage which ensures cohesion between the closing verses of *Genesis*, chapter 14, and the following chapter. In the OE *Genesis* (9b), the APC is translated by a temporal finite clause, and thus, although in a different form, its communicative meaning is preserved—as a sentence-initial discourse-old temporal clause it functions in the same way as the ablative absolute of the original.

Finally, discourse-old APCs are occasionally omitted in translation.

- (10) (a) [Ebrinus copiam pergendi ... tribuit eis] *Qua accepta* Theodorus
which-ABL accepted-ABL Theodore
profectus est ad Agilbertum Parisiorum episcopum
went to Agilbert of-the-Parisians bishop
‘[Ebroin gave them leave to continue their trip] having accepted it [the leave]
Theodore went to Agilbert, the bishop of Paris’
(Colgrave & Mynors 1969, HE iv.1.330.23)
(b) *Da ferde* Theodorus se biscop to Ægelberhte biscope Parissiorum
then went Theodore the bishop to Agilbert bishop of-the-Parisians
‘then bishop Theodore went to Agilbert, the bishop of Paris’
(Miller 1959 [1891], iv.1.256.11)

It may be repetitive in a way to say that the *leave* was both granted and accepted. Formally, there is nothing there in the OE text to reproduce the ablative absolute; communicatively, however, the thematic adverbial particle *ða* functions as tail-head linkage in the same way as *Qua accepta*.⁸ Its reduction in the translation does not hinder the understanding of the fragment.

This analysis suggests that the information structure of the original can be preserved in translation even when there is no structural equivalence between the source and target constructions. As general-cohesion text elements, APCs, prepositional temporal phrases, finite temporal clauses, and temporal adverbs provide a short summary that links their main clauses to the previous context. Although translation solutions are not directly influenced by the information structure of the original, it seems reasonable to conclude that discourse-old temporal APCs are occasionally omitted precisely because they carry no new information. As in example (10), their omission does not hinder the understanding of a given paragraph.

10.5.2 APCs of Attendant Circumstances

APCs of attendant circumstances provide local background for the sentences in which they occur. Their connection to the main clause is somewhat looser than that of temporal APCs. In terms of subordinate adverbial clauses, Old English has no equivalent to render this type of the APC. A typical transformation is one that involves an independent finite clause joined to the superordinate clause by a coordinator (40% of the renderings). The transformation is most frequent if the VP of the APC is a present participle.

- (11) (a) *ritum celebrandi paschae canonice per omnia comitante et*
rite of-celebrating Easter canonical over all accompanying-ABL and
cooperante Hadriano disseminabat (Colgrave & Mynors 1969, HE iv.2.332.21)
assisting-ABL Hadrian-ABL transmitted-he
‘he gave instruction on the canonical custom of celebrating Easter, Hadrian
accompanying him everywhere and assisting’
(b) & rihte Eastran to weorðianne lærde. *Onð* him *Adrianus se abbud mid ferde*,
and right Easter to solemnize taught and him Hadrian the abbot with went
& to eallum rehte *fulternade* (Miller 1959 [1891], iv.2.258.8)
and in all well helped
‘and he taught them to solemnize the canonical Easter and abbot Hadrian travelled
with him, and helped him well in everything’

Since both the word order of the Latin sentence and the context suggest that the APC here is discourse-new, the coordination makes the clauses equally important and thus can be claimed to reproduce the Latin information structure correctly.

10.5.3 Appositive APCs

Appositive APCs provide local details about the NP in the superordinate clause. Literal translation is one of the possible strategies here (27.9%). However, in many translations the participial construction is replaced by a PP with *mid* (30.2%). Compare versions C (= 12b) and H (= 12c) in the following example from Gregory’s *Dialogues*.

- (12) (a) *Tunc coruus, aperto ore expansis alis circa eundem*
then raven opened-ABL beak-ABL spread-ABL wings-ABL around that
panem coepit discurrere atque crocitare (de Vogüé 1978, GD ii.8.162.29)
loaf began to-run.and croak
‘then the raven, his beak opened and wings spread, began to run around that loaf
and to croak’
(b) *þa se hræfn untyndum his muþe & apenedum his fiderum*
then the raven opened-DAT his beak-DAT and spread-DAT his wings-DAT
ongan yrnan ymb þone ylcan hlaf & cræccettan (Hecht 1900, C 118.26)
began to-run around that same loaf and to-croak
(see (12a))
(c) *Se hreft þa mid openum muðe & mid apenedum fiderum*
the raven then with opened-DAT beak-DAT and with spread-DAT wings-DAT
ongann yrnan hoppetende & crakettan ymbutan þone ylcan hlaf
began to-run jumping and to-croak around that same loaf
‘then the raven with opened beak and spread wings began to run jumping and to
croak around that loaf’ (Hecht 1900, H 118.22)

Here two APCs are used one after another. The C version (12b) provides literal renderings, while in H (12c) both constructions are augmented by *mid*. It can be argued that

the preposition *mid* is one of the means by which relations of inalienable possession are expressed; the possessive *his* in C is used to the same end. Figure 10.3 gives a representation of the information structure of the relevant part of the Latin sentence.

Since the subjects of appositive APCs are predicted to be thematic, with an NP in the superordinate clause as anchor and bound to it by a part-whole relationship, and their participles are predicted to be rhematic, the figure above must be the basic structure for appositive APCs (also in Old English, when the rendering is similar to that in example (12)). They are typically positioned after the anchor NP: sentence-medially or finally (see Kortmann's data on Present-Day English APCs (1991: 95–9)).

Because with past participles in appositive APCs the agent of the participle and the subject of the finite verb always coincide, in translation the participle can be incorporated into the main clause as a second predicate (25.6% of the renderings).

- (13) (a) *Benedictus, extensa manu, signum crucis edidit*
Benedict extended-ABL hand-ABL sign of-cross made
'his hand stretched out, Benedict made the sign of the cross'
(de Vogüé 1978, GD ii.2.142.26)
- (b) *he þa Benedictus aþenede his handa & awrat Cristes rodetacn*
he then Benedict reached-out his hands and wrote Christ's cross-sign
'then Benedict reached out his hands and made the sign of the cross'
(Hecht 1900, C 105.1)
- (c) *þa aþenede Benedictus his hand & awrat Cristes rodetaken þær toweard*
then reached-out Benedict his hand and wrote Christ's cross-sign there toward
'then Benedict reached out his hand and made the sign of the cross in the direction [of the vessel]'
(Hecht 1900, H 105.2)

In both versions the translators choose a human subject (*Benedictus*), while *extensa— aþenede* and *edidit—awrat* become two coordinated predicates of *Benedictus*, and the NP of the APC (*manu*) becomes the direct object (*his hand(a)*) of *aþenede*. The possessive *his* in both translations emphasizes the notion of inalienable possession. I think that such renderings are triggered by the fact that the agent of the participle is always to be found in the theme of the superordinate clause, while the participle itself is bound to provide new information. Thus, once again, transformations preserve the information structure of the original, even though the form of the source construction is not replicated in Old English.

tunc coruus	ore	aperto coepit discurrere
	Theme2	Rheme2
Theme1	Rheme1	

Figure 10.3 Information structure in example (12).

10.5.4 APCs of Cause

As with temporal APCs, here too only omissions are directly dependent on the information structure of the original. Causal APCs can be omitted if they look repetitive in the context. The following example comes from chapter 33 of *Genesis*, in which Jacob, returning to the land of Canaan, meets his brother Esau and, asking his forgiveness, gives him rich presents, which Esau at first rejects. In verses 8–10, Jacob urges him to accept the gifts, and finally Esau agrees:

- (14) (a) *vix fratre compellente suscipiens ait*
unwillingly brother-ABL urging-ABL accepting said-he
'unwillingly, his brother urging him, accepting the gifts, he said'
(Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Gen 33.11–12)
- (b) *Ða underfeng he hi uneaþe & cwæð to him*
then accepted he them unwillingly and said to him
'then he accepted them unwillingly and said to him'
(Crawford 1922, Gen 33.11–12)

The ablative absolute *fratre compellente* is, in a way, a summary of the argument between Jacob and Esau. Being discourse-old, it can be easily omitted without affecting the overall meaning of the fragment. The particle *ða* introducing the OE sentence ensures paragraph cohesion.

10.5.5 APCs of Condition, Concession, and Manner

Since the remaining three uses amount to only 4.7% of examples in my data, my findings here are very fragmentary, and I address only those that could be connected to information structure. I have come across two similar instances in the OE *Genesis* in which conditional APCs are rendered by prepositional phrases. They are:

- (15) (a) *Cur ignorante me fugere uoluisti* (Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Gen 31.27)
why not-knowing-ABL I-ABL flee wanted-thou
'why would you flee if/when I was unaware?'
- (b) *Hwi woldest ðu sceacan butan minre gewitnyse* (Crawford 1922, Gen 31.27)
why wanted thou flee without my knowledge
'why would you flee without my knowing about it?'
- (16) (a) *Non enim possum redire ad patrem meum, absente puero*
not indeed can-I return to father my being-absent-ABL boy-ABL
'I truly cannot go back to my father, the boy being absent'
(Fischer et al. 1983 [1969], Gen 44.34)
- (b) *Ne dear ic ham faran butan þam cnapan* (Crawford 1922, Gen 44.34)
not dare I home go without the boy
'I dare not go home without the boy'

One common feature of these APCs is that they are both discourse-old; however, their renderings in Old English also seem to depend on the negative senses of the verbs

ignoro 'to not know' and *absum* 'to be away, not present,' which are translated by *butan minre gewitnysse* (the participle being nominalized) and *butan þam cnapan* (the participle being omitted) respectively.⁹ The fact that both *butan*-phrases are sentence-final reflects a general OE trend in the use of *butan* 'without' (see *DOE*, s.v. *butan*, II.B.). So here again, as in many instances mentioned earlier on, information structure is only one of the factors contributing to the translation process, not necessarily a decisive one.

To sum up, the following relationships between the semantics and information structure of the APC on the one hand, and its renditions into Old English on the other can be suggested: i) temporal and causal APCs can be omitted in translation because they typically contain discourse-old information; ii) APCs of attendant circumstances can be rendered by independent coordinate clauses, because they are predominantly discourse-new, and their subject is predicted not to coincide with the subject of the superordinate clause; iii) appositive APCs are likely to be incorporated into the structure of the superordinate clause as second predicates, because their subjects are always thematic and always bound to the main subjects by relations of inalienable possession, and their participles are predicted to be rhematic.

10.6 CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the decision to preserve or replace an APC in translation is seldom influenced by the information structure of the original construction or sentence alone, the amount of restructuring in the target text being rather a matter of the individual skill and attitude of a particular translator. What is perhaps more important is that translators seem to be quite capable of distinguishing, whether consciously or unconsciously, between text items of greater and lesser importance, or ones that we would classify as discourse-new and discourse-old. No matter how clumsy some translations may be, in general, they do reproduce the source information structure: old information is typically placed sentence-initially (in the form of an APC, temporal clause, or even an adverbial particle), while new information is placed sentence-medially or finally, depending on the form of the target structure—an APC (with or without a preposition), a coordinate predicate, or a coordinate clause. Text cohesion is thus maintained both by Latinate syntactic means and by expanding or abbreviating the source construction.

NOTES

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1. For a discussion of the origin of the absolute participial construction in Old English, see Callaway (1889: 24–30), Scheler (1961), Visser (1963–73: ii, §§1076–8, 1150), Mitchell (1985: ii, §§3825–31), and Timofeeva (2006, 2010); on the APC in Latin and other Indo-European languages, see Delbrück (1897), Bennett (1914), Flinck-Linkomies (1929), and Costello (1982).

2. In one of the few recent Latin grammars, we find a similar definition of the APC: "a dominant participle construction functioning as a satellite with regard to the remainder of the predication" (Pinkster 1990: 117–8) and "an embedded predication which as a whole functions as Adjunct" (Pinkster 1990: 277, n. 2; see also 132–34).
3. For a fuller discussion of these types, see Kortmann (1991: 91–101, 142–70) and Timofeeva (2010: 22–8).
4. See primary sources section for full references and Timofeeva (2010: 3–8) for details concerning the selection of these texts.
5. Note that Thompson and Longacre define *paragraph* as "a coherent stretch of discourse which is usually larger than a sentence and smaller than the whole discourse; the term can be used for either spoken or written language" (1985: 208; cf. Longacre 1979: 115–17).
6. The total in table 10.2 is lower than the overall number of examples referred to in the beginning of this section, as it is based on Latin originals. The total 524 includes two OE versions of Gregory's *Dialogues* and the *Life of St. Chad* (see section 10.3).
7. See example (4) for more context.
8. Adverbial particles, such as 'then,' 'well,' 'thereupon,' functioning as paragraph introducers are a crosslinguistically attested feature (Longacre 1979: 117).
9. Calboli's analysis of Latin APCs containing the participles *praesente* and *absente* suggests that in Late Latin they may be seen as grammaticalizing into prepositions (1983: 43–4): 'with somebody being present, in one's company' > 'with somebody' and 'with somebody being absent' > 'without somebody'.

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PART FOUR

Information Structure and the Internal Structure of the Noun Phrase